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INDIAN NOTES
AND MONOGRAPHS

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Report on The Oneida, Stockbridge
and Brotherton Indians • 1796

BY JEREMY BELKNAP AND JEDIDIAH MORSE

MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN
HEYE FOUNDATION

INDIAN NOTES *AND* MONOGRAPHS

[A Series of Publications Relating
To The American Aborigines]

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Report on The Oneida, Stockbridge and Brotherton Indians • 1796

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NEW YORK • 1955

The Committee appointed by the board of Commissioners of the Society established in Scotland for promoting Christian knowledge, to visit the Indians who are objects of their missions at Oneida, & Carstockbridge, under the care of the rev^d Mr. Kirkland & the rev^d Mr. Sergeant have attended that service; & after a long & tedious journey of more than six hundred miles, in the heat of summer, & have by the Divine blessing returned to Boston, & offer to the board the following Report:

N.B. To the board gave us not only a set of queries, but liberty to add any others which might occur to us - We have enlarged the number from sixteen to Twenty four, & shall divide or combine our answers to them, in such a manner, as we conceive will make our report more conspicuous.

Notes

* The Committee were Rev. Jeremy Belknap of Boston & Rev. Frederick Morse of Charleston D.C. -

+ This journey was performed in the months of June & July, 1796. - Dr. M. returned by way of New York & Philadelphia.

First page of Belknap-Morse Report



INTRODUCTION

SOME YEARS AGO Miss Mabel Choate presented the Museum library with a considerable collection of letters, tribal lists and other documents all related to the Stockbridge Indians.

Among these are several pieces from the personal records of Jedidiah Morse. One is a manuscript copy of the report he and Jeremy Belknap submitted to the Board of Commissioners of the Society established in Scotland for promoting Christian knowledge after some weeks' visit among the Oneida and Stockbridge Indians in New York State.

This report was first published, as far as can be ascertained, in the *Collections* of the Massachusetts Historical Society for the year 1798, First Series, volume 5, pp. 12-32. Perhaps this is the only publication of it to date. No copy of the report nor any reference to it is found in the archives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, in Boston. The British Museum Catalog lists only the Massachusetts Historical Society printing.

Because of the relative scarcity of the early series

of the Historical Society's *Collections* in many areas, it was thought that a reprinting of the Belknap-Morse findings would make them more readily available to students interested in the condition of the Oneida, Stockbridge and Brotherton groups at the end of the 18th century.

Where differences of marked degree exist between the copy from which the Massachusetts printing was made and that in the Museum's collections, these are noted. Spelling has been modernized, italics used only where emphasis is thought to have been intended, and there has been some arbitrary reparagraphing to present more balanced reading.

The ampersand, the economy of which has been employed throughout our copy, is expanded in the printing. Capitalization has been normalized. The initials J. M. have been appended to notations which exist either as foot or marginal notes in the Museum's copy of the report, and which all appear as footnotes here. Those not so identified are supplied in the present editing.

INDIAN REPORT • 1796

THE COMMITTEE¹ appointed by the Board of Commissioners of the Society established in Scotland for promoting Christian knowledge to visit the Indians who are objects of their missions at Oneida and New Stockbridge, under the care of the Revd. Mr. Kirkland and the Revd. Mr. Sergeant, have attended that service; and after a long and tedious journey of more than six hundred miles in the heat of summer, have by the Divine Blessing returned to Boston and offer to the Board the following Report.

N.B. As the board gave us not only a set of queries, but liberty to add any others which might occur to us, we have enlarged the number from sixteen to twenty-four, and shall divide or combine our answers to them in such a manner, as we conceive, will make our report more conspicuous.

¹ This Committee were Revd. Jeremy Belknap, of Boston, D.D. and Revd. Jedidiah Morse, of Charlestown, D.D. This journey was performed in the months of June and July 1796. Dr. M. returned by way of New York and Philadelphia.—J. M.

Query 1st. What is the number of souls among whom Messrs. Kirkland and Sergeant labor?

Answer. The objects of Mr. Kirkland's mission are the Indians of the Oneida nation, whose relative situation may be better understood by the map which accompanies this report, than by any verbal description. At the last enumeration, the number of men, women and children was six hundred and twenty-eight. There is annually an exact census taken of all these Indians, the reason of which will appear in our answer to the 19th query. Mr. Kirkland's residence is on a tract of land given him by the Oneidas and confirmed by the State of New York in 1789. The distance from his house to Kahnnonwolo-hale [Canowaroghere], the principal village of the Oneidas, is about twelve miles.

The objects of Mr. Sergeant's mission are Indians of New Stockbridge, who are on a tract of land six miles square, adjoining the s. e. part of the Oneida reservation as may be seen in the map.² The number of them is three hundred.

² In the M. H. S. printing no mention is made of the disposition of this map. Miss Walker cannot locate it in the archives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; nor does Mr. Riley, Librarian at the Massachusetts Historical Society, find it among the collections there.

By the Clinton Treaty with the Oneida at Fort Schuyler, September 22, 1788, the Stockbridge were granted a tract six miles square and the New England Indians (the Brotherton) one, three miles in length and two in breadth. Hough, Franklin B. (Ed. and Comp.): *Proceedings of the*

Mr. Sergeant resides in the village of New Stockbridge with part of his family; the other part resides at Old Stockbridge in the State of Massachusetts, distant about 160 miles. The legislature of New York have lately granted him a tract of land containing one square mile, which is to be located in that part of their late purchase of the Oneida reservation adjoining New Stockbridge.

On the n. e. part of New Stockbridge lies Brotherton containing those Indians who were lately under the care of the Revd. Samson Occum, deceased. They are one hundred and fifty in number; and are sometimes visited by the missionaries. They have lately petitioned for a missionary to be paid by the Society, 'till they shall be able to maintain one themselves.

Query 2nd. How many are professedly Pagans and how many are Christians?

Answer. In New Stockbridge are no professed Pagans. Among the Oneidas are eight adult persons who are thus denominated. This will be further answered under the 5th query.

Query 3rd. How many different breeds, or mixtures of blood are there among them?

Answer. The Indians of New Stockbridge are mostly pure, tho' there are some mixture of Whites.

commissioners of Indian affairs appointed by law for the extinguishment of Indian titles in the State of New York. Albany, 1861, 2 vols. (I, 244).

Among the Oneidas there is scarcely an individual who is not descended on one side from Indians of other nations, or from English, Scots, Irish, French, German, Dutch and some few, from Africans.

Mr. Dean, our interpreter, thinks that there has not been a *pure* Oneida in existence for above twelve years past.

Query 4th. Into how many different parties are they divided both political and religious?

Query 5th. What are their respective principles, views, interests and prejudices?

Answer. The Stockbridge Indians are not divided into religious parties at present, tho' during the life of Mr. Occum there was a division between those who preferred him to Mr. Sergeant and others who adhered to the latter. The principal division now among them is between those who are in favor of leaving their lands to the white people and those who prefer cultivating them with their own hands. The latter party has of late gained the ascendancy, as appears by their covenant dated June 3, 1796 a copy of which was delivered to us by Captain Hendrick Apaumut,³ sachem, accompanied with 4 strings of wampum.

³ Also spelled: Aupaumut, Arepaument, Umpaumut (1757-1830). Hendrick was concerned in the removal of the Stockbridge from Massachusetts to New York (1785-87) and was active in the attempt to settle the group among the Delaware on the White River, Indiana (c. 1818).

The Oneidas are divided between Pagans and Christians. We took some pains to enquire into the principles of the former and meeting with an old man of eighty, who is reputed the head of the Pagan party, we requested Mr. Dean to enter into conversation with him and give the result. It was this: Some of them address their devotions to the wind — others to the clouds and thunder — he to the rocks and mountains, which he believed to have an invisible, as well as visible existence, and an agency over human actions. To this kind of superintending power he had always trusted for success in hunting and in war, and generally obtained his desire. He had either killed or taken captive his enemy, and had been fortunate in the chase.

He regarded the ONEIDA STONE as a proper emblem or representation of the divinity which he worshipped. This stone we saw. It is of a rude unwrought shape, rather inclining to cylindrical, and of more than an hundred pounds weight. It bears no semblance to any stones which are found in that

His lineal and collateral descendents were active in Stockbridge affairs for many years.

Paul Weer, during his years of research on the history of the Walum Olum, (*Walum Olum*. Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Society, 1954, pp. 243-272; 366-370), crossed the trail of Hendrick so often in the records of the White River area (1810-1820) that his interest in the Captain was aroused. Such interest is to result in a biography of Apaumut, also to be published by the Indiana Historical Society, probably to be titled: *Captain Hendrick, Stockbridge Sachem*.

country. From whence it was originally brought, no one can tell. The tradition is, that it follows the nation in their removals. From it the name of the nation is derived, for Oneida signifies "the upright stone." When it was set up in the crotch of a tree the nation was supposed invincible. It is now placed in an upright position on the earth, at the door of the old man's house. A stout man can carry this stone about 40 or 50 rods without resting; and this is the manner in which it may be said (with the help of a little priestcraft) to follow them in their removals.

Tho' the number of professed Pagans be small, yet the whole nation, notwithstanding their opportunities for religious improvement, are still influenced in a great degree by their old mythology. They are universally firm believers in witchcraft and invisible agency. They pay great regard to dreams and omens, and attribute the most common events to causes with which there can be no natural connection. Not long since an Indian was drowned in one of the Oneida creeks which are annually visited by the salmon. When the season came they imagined that no fish could be found in that stream, 'till a gentleman of Albany,⁴ who happened at that time to be at Fort Stanwix persuaded them that he had put something in the water to purify it, on which they resorted to the creek and took the fish as formerly, and tho't themselves much obliged to the gentleman for his skill and goodness.

⁴ Genl. [Philip John] Schuyler. — J. M.

The first missionaries who came among these people were French Jesuits from Canada, who were very fond of baptizing their children as soon as they were born, and taught them that delays were dangerous. The moral characters of the parents were of no consequence, if sponsors could be obtained the ceremony was performed, the fee paid, and a bottle of rum drank on the occasion.

When adults defied baptism, they were taught to say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and to make a confession to the priests, as the only prerequisites to the administration of the Ordinance. The godfather gave the name, and, if he was able, treated the company with an exhilarating draught. This is the account which the Indians give of "the *old* way" which they say had no difficulty, and might easily be complied with, and so much influence has the remembrance of this "*old* way" upon them, that when the present missionaries decline to baptize any of their children, they carry them 30 or 40 miles to the German or Dutch settlements, down the Mohawk River, where, on payment of the usual fee of half a dollar, they find no difficulty in obtaining baptism, and are then perfectly easy about the salvation of their children. As far, therefore, as this kind of baptism may denominate them Christians, the whole nation, except the few Pagans above mentioned, may be said to be so.

The Whig and Tory distinction produced by the late war is not yet forgotten. Some few of the

Oneidas joined with the British, but the greater part of them adhered to the Americans, and after the destruction of their villages and church by the enemy, they removed down to the plains of Schenectady and were served with rations at the expense of the United States during the remainder of the war. Compensation for their losses has been made them by the Legislature of the Union.⁵ Those persons who went off to the British, are still objects of jealousy.

There is also a party created by the intrigues of some persons who bought a large tract of their land, but the sale was not confirmed by the State of New York. The spirit of contention on this account, has been carried to a great height.

Query 6th. What is the number of those who are instructed in the principles of the Gospel, and seem to be influenced by them?

Answer. At New Stockbridge the people in general attend on the public instructions of Mr. Sergeant and the religious conferences which he holds with them. The church consists of five men and twenty-five women. Of the latter, none is under suspension, and but one is complained of as disorderly. Of the former, two have been disciplined for intoxication, and are under suspension. We were present at one religious exercise,⁶ which was decently attended and

⁵ Treaty at Oneida, December 2, 1794.

⁶ Dr. Belknap prayed and Dr. Morse preached. — J. M.

their singing was remarkably soft and harmonious. Many of these people, male and female, can read English and some few can write. They received, with great pleasure, some religious books⁷ which we distributed among them.

Among the Oneidas are 36 women who are reputed sober and of these Mr. Kirkland thinks 24 are serious Christians. There are three or four men of a sober character in general. One man only attended the last Communion — this was John Skanandogh, and he is said by some to be the only man in the nation who never indulges himself in drinking to excess. He has very little influence in the nation, tho' one of the chiefs.

The present missionaries baptize no children but those whose parents (at least one of them) are in communion with the Church. The number of baptisms performed by them is consequently very small, not more than 6 or 7 in a year in each mission. The Lord's Supper is administered not oftener than 3 times in a year.

It may be here observed that among the Oneidas, children are reckoned to belong to the mother rather than the father. They are numbered with the tribe or clan to which the mother belongs. These tribes are three, and are distinguished by the names of the Wolf, the Bear and the Turtle. If the mother dies before the father, the mother's relations take the children and educate them.

⁷ Given by Mr. Wm. Woodbridge. — J. M.

Thus it sometimes happens that the children of a Christian father are taken from him and educated by the Pagan relatives of the mother. An instance of this now exists.

The son of Good Peter⁸ (who died lately) was taken from him at his wife's death, and educated by the old Pagan aforementioned, who was her brother. This young Peter is a different character from his father, and makes no pretensions to religion. He has murdered several persons and has a most savage and ferocious aspect; but he is a great orator and has more influence among the Oneidas than any other person. We called to see him, and he thanked us for it, adding that we supposed it was on his father's account we took notice of him.

In the savage state it was usual for the young men to attach themselves to no particular female, but to rove at large among them till they had passed the vigor of youth and then confine themselves to one.

At present the Oneidas marry young and are said to be more continent than formerly. But the indecency of habit in the males, they being universally *sans culottes*, having only one small anterior and another equally small posterior cloth flap to cover their uncomely parts, is not a very favorable symptom; and the hard treatment which the women re-

⁸ Good Peter, or Aqwelewntongwas, was one of the principal participants in the negotiations at Fort Schuyler by Gov. George Clinton, which treaty was signed September 22, 1788. (See: Hough, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, p. 216 ff.).

ceive from their husbands, being obliged to labor when they are idle, does not indicate the prevalence of Christian principles to any great extent.

Murders are said to be not so frequent as formerly; but a melancholy instance happened a few days before our arrival. Two young men had a quarrel, and one shot the other dead; the father of the dead immediately went and killed the murderer, and no further notice was taken of the matter.⁹

Peter, aforementioned, about 2 years ago killed an Onondaga Indian; the Onondagas sought for Peter in vain, and when they could not find him, took their revenge by killing an innocent Oneida Indian. Peter has also killed several persons suspected of witchcraft. Not long since an Indian of the Tuscarora Nation killed his uncle, a chief. Complaint was made to an English magistrate and the murderer was imprisoned in Herkimer County jail. This trial¹⁰ will bring on a question whether the laws of New York extend to the Indians.

Last summer Joseph Brandt, a Mohawk chief, and a captain in the British service, formerly one of Dr. Wheelock's scholars, murdered his own son, who was indeed a very bad fellow, and had attempted the life of his father. Brandt resigned, but Lord Dorchester would not accept his resignation.

⁹ In the M. H. S. printing (p. 18) a detailed account of this affair, taken from the journal of Rev. Mr. Sargeant for June 7, is supplied as a foot note.

¹⁰ It was to take place in July 1796. — J. M.

Query 7th. In what kind of principles, called Gospel principles, are they instructed?

Query 8th. Whether any of them make objections to these principles and what are their objections?

Answer. Messrs. Kirkland and Sergeant are both Presbyterians and Calvinists, as may be seen by the heads of their discourses in their journals. Mr. Sergeant says that he does not meddle with high points such as predestination and the origin of evil, but preaches faith, repentance and morality. Mr. Kirkland, being very ill when we saw him, did not talk on any subjects, but he is well known to be very firm in the doctrine of Calvinism.

The Indians are not fond of disputation and do not usually make objections to particular doctrines. They rather object to the strictness which is required by the missionaries in regard to the qualifications for admission to Gospel ordinances. Formerly, they objected to receive Christianity, because it served to degrade them in the view of the confederated nations; but as to the external forms of religion they are not now averse to being called Christians.

Query 9th. What number of them have renounced their old habits of roving, idleness, and intemperance, especially when the means of indulging to excess in drinking spirits occur?

Answer. This has been partly answered under the 6th query. But it may be further observed with re-

spect to roving, tho' their former hunting ground has been purchased of them and is almost entirely occupied by white husbandmen, and the game consequently driven away or destroyed, yet so fond are they of roving that many of them are frequently strolling among the whites and making long visits where they can find food and liquor. *Idleness* is the sin which most easily besets them, and is the parent of many vices. "Indians cannot work" is a saying frequently in their mouths. They have an idea that to labor in cultivating the earth is degrading to the character of man, "who (they say) was made for war and hunting and holding 'councils', and that squaws and hedgehogs, are made to scratch the ground." Another of their proverbial traditions is that the Great Spirit gave the white man a plough, and the red man a bow and arrow, and sent them into the world by different paths, each to get his living in his own way.

With respect to drinking spirits, excepting the few persons beforementioned, they are generally, and we fear incurably, addicted to intemperance, whenever they have the means in their power. This is the character of all the savages of North America.

Query 10th. Of what character are the white people who reside in their vicinity, and particularly those who are connected with them?

Answer. In New Stockbridge, there is but one white family, that of Mr. Sergeant. The white peo-

ple of the neighboring settlements have but little intercourse with the Stockbridge Indians; there is a good road thro' their village, on which there is frequent passing of white people, and too often on the Lord's Day.

Among the Oneidas there are some white people who reside as mechanics, and others who go occasionally to trade with them. These are said to be in general persons of not the best moral characters, and indeed there is very little inducement for people who have any regard to reputation to reside among them. Such persons can live much more agreeably in the neighboring settlements of the whites, without any connection with the Indians.

Formerly the nearest white neighbors to the Indians of Oneida, were the Germans and Dutch on the Mohawk River. These were all broken up by the late war, and the whole of the Mohawk Nation of Indians who resided at several places on that river, left their villages about the year 1780, and have never returned. At the peace, the Germans and Dutch resumed their plantations, but 'till the year 1785 there was not a white family above the German Flats. Since that time the country has been rapidly populated and cultivated by people who removed from several parts of New England and who have, in that short space, made greater improvements in cultivation and breeding of cattle than the Germans had attained in 70 years.

In the district comprehended between the Oneida

present as frame partly covered, & the work is suspended.
The following extract from the report of the Regents of
the University of New York, will give a true view of
its present circumstances. (vide Journal of the Senate
of N.Y. March 2, 1796 page 14.)

"The Trustees of the Academy of Hamilton
Ontario in the County of Herkimer have erected the frame of a
building for an Academy which will require a considerable sum
of money to complete. There is now a small school room half a
mile from the Academy in which scholars have formerly
been taught, but no teacher has been employed & no
school kept since September 1794."

"The funds ~~had~~ for an institution here consist of 425 acres
of land in the neighbourhood of the Academy, chiefly
uncultivated, & 400 Dollars on a subscription not yet
collected."

"An incumbrance of 1000 Dollars has been laid on the
land by the trustees for the purpose of raising the frame of the
building. It was judged by the visiting committee to be
inexpedient to apply any part of the money assigned
to this Academy."

On enquiry we found that the whole of the 425 acres
of land had been mortgaged for 1000 Dollars, & that
the "money assigned" was intended money assigned to the
general purpose of education by the Legislature
of the State of New York, which amounts to 53,700
Dollars.

Signed

Jeremy Belknap
John Morse

reservation and the Mohawk river above the German Flats, which is now divided into three townships, Whitestown, Paris, and Westmoreland, there were in 1785 but two families, those of Hugh White and Moses Foot, but now, in 1796, there are within the same limits six parishes with five settled ministers, three full regiments of militia, and one corps of light horse, all in uniform. Besides this rapid population on the eastern side of the Oneida country, there are many thriving settlements on the north, west and south, which are every year increasing by emigrations from New England, New Jersey and the lower parts of New York. Thus these Indians are entirely surrounded by the white people who are in general sober, peaceable, and well informed; and their plantations are continually enlarging and improving by the hand of industry. Among them, however, there is a mixture of the intemperate, knavish, and profane; and it is unhappy for the Indians, that they have more connection with these than with the virtuous part of the community.

Query 11th. Whether any regulations have been adopted by the Indians as a political body to prevent the excessive use of spirituous liquors; if so, whether such regulations have been carried into execution?

Answer. Some regulations have been made and executed at New Stockbridge, and the number of retail houses is lessened. That party who are in favor of leasing their lands are the most addicted to

intemperance; but it is acknowledged, that those who are called, in general, steady and sober men will at some times transgress the rules of intemperance.

At Oneida, the chiefs have frequently attempted to prohibit the introduction and sale of spirituous liquors; but from the small degree of power, which they possess and the want of subordination among the people, these attempts have hitherto proved ineffectual. The authority of sachems and chiefs is merely that of recommendation, without any coercion of penal sanction. When, therefore, offenders can transgress with impunity, no regulations can have any effect.

They seem to be sensible of the necessity of some coercive measures, to check the prevalence of intoxication, and have petitioned the Legislature of New York on the subject. A copy of this petition was given to us by Captain Hendrick. We could not learn that anything was done in answer to this petition. Labor and industry are the best antidote to intemperance.

Query 12th. Whether in any considerable number they have addicted themselves to the art of industry and agriculture, so as to procure a decent subsistence for themselves and families?

Answer. At New Stockbridge it is computed that about two-thirds of the men and nine-tenths of the women are industrious. Agriculture and the breeding of cattle and swine are their chief employ-

ments by which they procure a sufficiency of food; and by selling part of their produce are able to purchase their clothing. They have but few sheep, and a little flax; and they seem to be desirous of improving in both these articles. Sheep may be multiplied with ease if the woods are cleared, especially as there are no wolves in that neighborhood.

There is a single instance of a woman who, last year, wove 16 yards of woolen cloth, and by the increase of her sheep, expects the present year to weave double the number. We made particular enquiry for her and gave her our hearty benediction. Her name is Esther. She is a widow of forty years of age, has seven children and an infirm sister, who depend on her for maintenance. The sachem Hendrick Apaumut has a good field of wheat,¹¹ Indian corn, potatoes, and grass, and we had the pleasure of meeting him in the road driving his ox team. The fences in general are good, and the land under tolerable cultivation in New Stockbridge. One *grand reason* of this will appear under the 17th Query.

At Oneida the case is very different, the reasons of which will be seen in our answers to the 17th and 19th Queries. Their agriculture is in its infancy, labor being performed almost wholly by the women.

¹¹ A letter from Mr. Sergeant dated Oct. 1796, says: "The people are very thankful for the book on farming (Dr. Dean's NE. Farmer) you was so good as to send them. Almost every family have sowed wheat this fall." — J. M. This letter is in the Museum's Stockbridge collections. It is dated October 28th.

An Oneida chief, John Skanandogh excepted, would think himself degraded by driving a team or guiding a plough.

Not more than 2 or 3 families procure a subsistence by agriculture; and these have little encouragement to proceed, because their neighbors will live upon them as long as they have any thing to eat. They may be said to procure a "subsistence" by fishing and fowling, and by raising some corn and beans and potatoes by the labor of their squaws, and by the help of what money they receive, hereafter to be mentioned; but what subsistence they get in these and all other ways would hardly be tho't "decent" by any people except themselves.

The Oneidas affect to despise their neighbors of Stockbridge and Brotherton for their attention to agriculture, but they are obliged to buy their corn and meat of them. We saw several Oneida women bearing burdens of corn on their backs, which they had been thither to buy; and an Oneida chief and his wife driving a hog, which died with [from the?] heat, from N. Stockbridge to Oneida.

Query 13th. In what manner is the money granted annually by Congress to establish and encourage husbandry and manufactures expended; and what improvements have been made?

Answer. By a treaty made 1794 between the United States on the one part and the Six Nations, and their Indian friends residing with them on the

other part,¹² it was stipulated that "the sum of 4500 Dollars should be expended annually and forever in purchasing clothing, domestic animals, implements of husbandry and other utensils, and in compensating useful artificers who shall reside among them and be employed for their benefit."

This allowance is under the direction of a superintendent, and is not distributed for any private purposes. It is apportioned among them according to their numbers, which are as follows:

	Residing in the United States	Within the British lines. These receive no part of the Grant.
Mohawks		300
Oneidas	628	
Cayugas	40	460
Onondagas	450	
Tuscaroras	400	
Senekas	1780	
Stockbridge	300	
Brotherton	150	
	<hr/> 3748	<hr/> 760

The first and second year's pension paid to the Stockbridge Indians has been expended in building a sawmill and keeping a school. The next year's is

¹² Treaty at Canandaigua, November 11, 1794.

appropriated to the erection of a smith's shop, and the procuring a workman with tools and iron.

As soon as they can afford it, they propose to encourage by premiums the raising of sheep, flax and grain, the manufacture of linen and woolen cloth, and the clearing up of lands. At present the school is intermitted. Their last school master was John Queney,¹³ one of their own sons, who received an education at Orangedale Academy in New Jersey, near Newark.

The Oneidas have received their share of the allowance in the erection of a sawmill, in the support of a blacksmith, and in the purchasing of oxen and implements of husbandry. It is also in contemplation to build a church in their principal village.

A deputation from the Society of Quakers in Pennsylvania has been sent the present summer to reside with the Indians of Oneida, New Stockbridge, etc., and assist them in husbandry and the mechanic arts.

We met these gentlemen and had a friendly conversation with them and they gave us a copy of their commission.

The Stockbridge Indians have received some assistance with regard to instruments of husbandry from the Society established in Massachusetts for

¹³ In the M. H. S. printing, the name is given as Quency. This is a typographical error, as the Quinney family was prominent in the affairs of the Stockbridge through several generations, in Massachusetts, New York and after the removal to Wisconsin.

propagating the Gospel among the Indians and others in North America.

Query 14th. Whether it be true, as has been strongly affirmed to the Society, that the arts of civilization and industry, when adopted by the Indians, have such an unhappy effect on them that few of them long survive?

Answer. This matter must have been inaccurately stated, however strongly affirmed. We never heard of any Indians who have perished or shortened their lives by civilization and industry. Very few have even made the experiment, and with regard to those few, no such effect has followed from it. There are at this time above 1000 Indians, pure and mixed, in Massachusetts, most of whom have attained as great degree of civilization and industry as can generally be expected of such people, and those who are sober and prudent live as long as others in the same circumstances. The Indians of New Stockbridge and Brotherton, who removed from several parts of New England a few years ago, afford another evidence that the assertion made to the Society is not founded in fact.

There are among them as great a proportion of aged persons both male and female, as among white people. Skanandogh, the most industrious man of the Oneidas, is between 60 and 70 years old and his wife is about the same age. Had it been said that those individuals upon whom the best attempts of

civilization had been made, have proved the most vicious and abandoned, and that the vices acquired by them in consequence of a preposterous mode of education had bro't them to an untimely end, the assertion might have passed uncontroverted. There have been instances of this among the western Indians, but with respect to these nations in general it may be said that the experiment has never been made.

We imagine that this question must have originated from a report of the almost total extinction of the Natick Indians, who were in the last century so numerous as to be objects of the labors of the venerable Mr. Eliot, of Roxbury. He translated the Bible into their language; which then was understood by other tribes within the limits of New England, but there are now so few Indians who understand that language, that the Bible which he translated is become almost useless, and is to be found only in some public libraries, or private cabinets as a curiosity. It is true also, that the remains of the Natick Indians whose residence was within 20 miles of Boston, and of other smaller tribes who understood the same language, are at this day so blended with blacks and whites, and so scattered as not to be known or distinguished; but that these effects have resulted from their civilization and industry, is an assertion which cannot be admitted. An idle and desultory mode of life is more likely to have been the cause of their present undistinguish-

able situation; not to mention various incidents in the course of Providence, which are not under the control of human power.

Query 15th. Whether consumptions and other disorders of the lungs are more prevalent among them now than in their former savage state? If so,

Query 16th. Whether it be owing to intemperance or to the disuse of furs, and the introduction of cotton and linen for clothing?

Answer. As the subject of these queries is a matter of *opinion* only, the information which we have received from some gentlemen, differs from that of others. No regular accounts of deaths and casualties have been kept and, therefore, no knowledge can be had from the best source. It is said that the intemperate are more subject to consumptions than the sober; but no comparison can be made between their present and former state, by which the greater or less frequency of these complaints can be ascertained. A physician¹⁴ who has resided in the neighborhood of the Oneidas asserts that pulmonic disorders are frequent among them.

Another gentleman¹⁵ who is not a physician, but whose opportunities for observation have been very

¹⁴ In the M. H. S. printing, he is identified as Dr. Hopkins. Morse has no such footnote in the Museum copy.

¹⁵ Mr. Dean. — J. M. James Dean (1748-1814), Kirkland's interpreter, mentioned earlier in the report. For a short biographical sketch of Dean, see Footnote in Hough, *op.cit.*, vol. I, pp. 27-8.

favorable, is of a different opinion, and ascribes the disorders to the extremes of heat and cold, to which they subject themselves in their paroxysms of ebriety. Whilst another gentleman¹⁶ of great respectability, who has been frequently conversant with the Indians in various parts of this continent, is of opinion that their tender lungs are injured by a want of free perspiration owing to their disuse of furs, which they have for the most part converted into articles of traffic rather than clothing.

Amidst this diversity, we must acknowledge that our acquaintance with the subject is not sufficient to enable us to give any decided opinion supported by facts or observations.

Query 17th. Have any of the Indians distinct property in lands?

Answer. Those of New Stockbridge and Brotherton have made a division of their lands, so that each one holds his landed property as an estate in fee simple, with this restriction, that it shall never be sold to white people. This is the *grand reason* of their superiority in point of agricultural improvements to their brethren, the Oneidas, Tuscaroras, etc. An attempt has been made to bring the Oneidas into the same regulation, and an instrument was drawn by the late superintendent General [Israel] Chapin, and signed by the sachems, chiefs and warriors of the nation December 3rd, 1794, by which

¹⁶ Gen. [Benjamin] Lincoln. — J. M.

they engaged: "to set apart to any person who should require it, 200 acres of land to be held by him and his posterity, with power to sell the same to any person of the Oneida nation, but not to any of the white people."¹⁷ And to keep this engagement in mind it was agreed that it should be "read once a year in full council." But on enquiry we could not find that any thing had been done in consequence of this agreement.

They allow any of their people to fence and cultivate as much land as they please, and to take off the crops; but the land is the common property of the nation; and if one who has been at the pains to do this should have more corn or meat than is sufficient for his own use in the winter season, they will visit him, and expect to be fed as long as there is anything to be eaten. This is a great discouragement to those who are disposed to be industrious, of which the number is but small.

Query 18th. Are any of them under the guardianship of the State of New York?

Answer. The whole of the Six Nations and their associates who reside within the limits of the State, are under the guardianship of its Legislature, so far as that they are not allowed to sell their land to pri-

¹⁷ In the M. H. S. printing there here occurs the following sentence, not present in the Museum copy: "It was also agreed, that these lots of land 'should be laid out in regular form, and contiguous to each other, that the labor of fencing might be lessened.'"

vate persons, but to the State only, and no contract is valid unless confirmed by the State Legislature. They have no representation in the Legislature, and there is a doubt among the lawyers whether the penal laws of the State extend to them, unless in cases where both parties in a controversy voluntarily subject themselves to the authority. The Brotherton Indians are more particularly under the guardianship of the State, as may be seen by a late act of [the] Assembly, a copy of which accompanies this report.¹⁸

Query 19th. What sums of money or quantities of goods do the Indians receive from the State? How are they divided and what use is made of them?

Answer. The Stockbridge Indians receive nothing from the State of New York.

The Brotherton Indians receive an annuity of 2160 Dollars, which sum is partly appropriated to the purpose of maintaining a school, partly to the payment of an attorney to transact their business, and the remainder to be applied to *their* benefit, as *he* shall judge proper.

The Oneidas have for several years past received 600 Dollars annually, as a consideration for the lands purchased of them by the State. The Cayugas 600, and the Onondagas 400.

¹⁸ Act passed March 31, 1795; 18th session of the New York State Legislature. See: Greenleaf, Thomas: *Laws of the State of New York*, vol. 3 (1777-1797), pp. 207-10.

No goods have been given to them by the State; but the Six Nations received from the United States a present of goods about two years since, as a compensation for their losses and removals during the late war, which were equally divided among them according to their numbers. The amount of this compensation was 10,000 Dollars.

By an act of the Legislature of New York, passed on April 1st of the present year, the Oneidas are to receive of the State an annuity of 3552 Dollars, in consequence of a purchase of lands made in 1795, and in lieu of all former stipulations. The Cayugas 2300 and the Onondagas 2000.

When these annuities are paid to the Indians, *viz*, the Oneidas, Cayugas and Onondagas, the money is divided to every person in each nation. This renders an exact enumeration necessary; and if a child be born but one hour before the money is paid, that child has an equal share with the oldest sachem.

It is the practice of the Indians to keep themselves sober during the time that they are receiving and dividing this annuity. But when they have got their several shares, according to the number in each family, they are at liberty to dispose of the money as they please. Those who are prudent and frugal expend it for clothing, and provisions, those who are idle and intemperate gratify their appetites to excess, and the whole soon gets into the hands of the traders in the neighboring towns, or those who resort to the Indian villages with goods, wares and

liquors about the time of payment. Some of the Indians even anticipate their shares by running in debt to these traders.

These annuities, as they are now managed, are supposed to operate as a discouragement to industry. For as long as Indians can get their living by any other means, they will not work.

Query 20th. Have the Indians increased or decreased in number since the establishment of the missions? And

Query 21st. If, decreased, what are the causes?

Answer. It is the opinion of those who are best acquainted with them, that they have rather increased; but not in so great a proportion as the white people. About three years since, forty of the Oneidas died of the dysentery, and within a year past the measles have proved fatal to some.

We recommended to the missionaries to keep regular accounts of births, deaths, marriages, emigrations, and immigrations, and to transmit them annually to the Society.

Query 22nd. Whether the attempts to civilize the Indians have been pushed as rapidly, as to give them time to change their habits?

Answer. The difference between the savage and civilized modes of life is so great that it is impossible for either the body or mind to accommodate itself to the change with any great degree of rapidity. If,

therefore, expectations of a sudden change have been excited, they must necessarily have been disappointed.

Several causes may be considered as having an influence in producing the disappointment of sanguine expectations relative to the civilization of the savages. Their national pride, indolence and improvidence, their tenacity of common property in their lands, together with the annuities which they receive from the State of New York, have been already mentioned. These necessarily operate as hindrances to their civilization; let it also be considered that the human mind is naturally averse to control. If under the peculiar advantages which we enjoy from education, science, government and experience, we find among ourselves a great proportion of men, who are loath to surrender so many of their natural rights as are necessary to give strength and safety to those which are retained, we cannot be surprised that the savage nations should be averse to making a surrender of their present customs and manners, and sacrificing them to a system with which they are in a great degree unacquainted.

We find by observation how hard it is for people advanced in years to exchange the ideas and habits to which they have long been accustomed, for those which are new, and even when they are convinced that the exchange will be for their benefit, it requires great strength of mind and a spirit of enterprise, which does not fall to the lot of every man, to enter on new projects. If this be true of people who

have had the great advantages, what can be expected of those who have had much less, and whose prejudices in favor of ancient customs and manners have acquired strength in proportion to their want of light and knowledge?

It may be added, that some experiments of what is called civilization and a polite education which have been made upon individuals, have served rather to disgust the Indians and retard the progress of improvement.

The following picture, however highly colored, yet may be considered as drawn from the life. An Indian youth has been taken from his friends and conducted to a new people, whose modes of thinking and living, whose pleasures and pursuits are totally dissimilar to those of his own nation. His new friends profess love to him, and a desire for his improvement in human and divine knowledge, and for his eternal salvation, but at the same time endeavor to make him sensible of his inferiority to themselves. To treat him as an equal would mortify their own pride, and degrade themselves in the view of their neighbors. He is put to school, but his fellow students look on him as a being of an inferior species. He acquires some knowledge, and is taught some ornamental and perhaps useful accomplishments; but the degrading memorials of his inferiority which are continually before his eyes, remind him of the manners and habits of his country, where he was once free and equal to his associates.

He sighs to return to his friends, but there he meets with the most bitter mortification. He is neither a white man nor an Indian, as he had no character with us he has none with them. If he has strength of mind sufficient to renounce all his acquirements, and resume the savage life and manners, he may possibly be again received by his countrymen, but the greater probability is that he will take refuge from their contempt in the inebriating draught; and when this becomes habitual, he will be guarded from no vice, and secure from no crime. His downward progress will be rapid, and his death premature.

Such has been the fate of several Indians who have had the opportunity of enjoying an English or French education and have returned to their native country. Such persons must either entirely renounce their acquired habits and resume their savage life, or, if they live among their countrymen, then must be despised, and their death will be unlamented.

Query 23rd. Is any distinction to be made between the Indians who removed from Stockbridge and other parts of New England to the Oneida country and the Oneidas themselves?

Answer. It must appear from the foregoing observations that the former are in an improvable state with respect to husbandry and other branches of civilization, tho' there are vices and defects a superiority of character as native lords of the soil, appear more corrupt and degraded than the former. Once

we coveted their friendship either from fear or policy, but neither of these motives can now have any influence; they are rather objects of pity. They might indeed become respectable and enjoy that independence which belongs to good husbandry.

They have a large tract of the most excellent land extremely well situated with respect to lakes and streams of water which form an early transportation for the productions of the earth to good markets; but they are insensible of these advantages and attached to their ancient habits, which are now become impracticable. They must lay aside the character of hunters because their game is gone, and its haunts are rendered infinitely more valuable by cultivation. They cannot be warriors because they have no enemies to contend with. If, therefore, they continue to despise husbandry, the only remaining source of opulence and independence, they either retire to some distant region of the American forest; or live as spendthrifts on the price of their lands; or become strollers and beggars 'till, like their brethren of Natick, they shall cease to have political existence among mankind.

Query 24th. What is the present state of the Oneida or Hamilton Academy, which has been represented as "the last effort to be made, together with agriculture and gradual introduction of the civil arts, for the national prosperity and happiness of the Indians?"

Answer. The situation of Hamilton Academy is on the eastern side of a commanding eminence, half a mile from the house of the Revd. Mr. Kirkland, and about eleven miles eastward of the nearest Indian villages. The building is 82 feet long, 44 wide and 3 stories high. It is at present a frame partly covered, and the work is suspended.

The following extract from the report of the Regents of the University of New York, will give a true idea of its present circumstances. (*vide* Journal of the Senate of N. Y., March 2nd, 1796, page 14th):¹⁹

“The Trustees of the Academy of Hamilton Oneida in the County of Herkemer have erected the frame of a building for an academy which will require a considerable sum of money to complete. There is a small schoolroom half a mile from the Academy in which scholars have formerly been taught, but no teacher has been employed, nor school kept since September 1794.”

“The funds for an institution here consist of 425 acres of land in the neighborhood of the Academy, chiefly uncultivated, and 400 Dollars on a subscription not yet collected.”

“An incumbrance of 1000 Dollars has been laid on the land by the trustees for the purpose of raising the frame of the building. It was judged by the

¹⁹ In the M. H. S. printing this is further identified (p. 32) as an extract from a report of the Regents of the University, March 6, 1797.

visiting committee to be inexpedient to apply any part of the money assigned to this Academy."

On enquiry we found that the whole of the 425 acres of land had been mortgaged for 1000 Dollars, and that by "money assigned" was intended money assigned to the general purpose of education by the Legislature of the State of New York, which amounts to 53,700 Dollars.

Signed—Jeremy Belknap }
Jedh. Morse } Comtee.

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